

DOVER, DE Approved For Release 2001/03/04 : CIA-RDP80-
STATE NEWS

E - 18,266

OCT 9 1969

Soviet Eye In The Sky Aims At Us

The Soviet Union's recent launch of its 300th Cosmos satellite since March, 1962, triggers this query:

Has it required 300 scientific satellites to find out about the earth's magnetic field, its cosmic rays, its upper atmosphere and cloud cover, the sun's radiation?

U. S. space intelligence sources answer this way: Not nearly that many satellites were needed to gather knowledge of these phenomena which Russian scientists claim is vital to the design and building of tomorrow's Soviet space stations and interplanetary ships.

The logical conclusion of space intelligence experts is that many of the 300 Cosmos satellites hoisted aloft by Russia are surveillance vehicles placed in orbit to keep an eye on activities at U. S. military bases and spaceports.

(The National Aeronautics and Space Administration, incidentally, has its own intelligence arm, works to some extent with military intelligence and depends little on the civilian Central Intelligence Agency.)

Some Cosmos satellites are known to have carried medical and biological experiments. For example, Cosmos 110 had two dogs aboard for nearly a month of earth orbit in February and March of 1966. And Cosmos 186 and 188 achieved the first automatic rendezvous and docking of two unmanned craft flying in space during November of 1967.

However, after all the Cosmos flights whose missions were explained in some detail by the Russians, there still are countless others shrouded in secrecy.

Some of these are tagged by intelligence analysts as space "snoopers."

The United States has made no move to protest the suspected fleet of Soviet space "spies." It has no proof that Russia could not discount, and besides, the shoe is on the other foot, too.

America has its own coterie of "detectives" in space and, like Russia, is planning others. Neither nation is violating any law or code, for none has been prescribed. The only existing space treaty so far is one which forbids space powers or potential ones from detonating nuclear test devices in the atmosphere or space. Red China is not a signatory, so she violated no law or treaty by setting off a three-megaton nuclear blast in the atmosphere recently.

The U. S. Air Force developed the Samos and Midas surveillance satellites, reasonably early in the space program. Then there was Bambi, another more complicated version which never became operational. Today a satellite with the strange name Vela Hotel is the nation's first-line space-roving reporter.

This spy-in-the-sky is part of the Vela Project—the development of means to detect clandestine nuclear weapons testing. It has three major phases—Hotel, Sierra and Uniform. They can be remembered best this way: Hotel starts with H, for high; Sierra starts with S for surface and Uniform starts with U for underground.

While Vela Hotel satellites, now in earth orbit, are de-

blast surveillance, their complex electronic sensing systems can detect other activities of vital significance to U. S. intelligence.

The Gemini and Apollo camera-equipped spacecraft, both manned and unmanned, have proved U. S. ingenuity in snapping sharply defined photos of earth from space, with such detail that roads and even objects such as autos can be singled out.

While great secrecy surrounds an upcoming new family of space surveillance satellites, it is known some already are being tested and others are in the development stage.

Some are equipped with still cameras, others with television receivers and transmitters to beam pictures back to earth receiving stations already used successfully during the Apollo manned space flight series.

Most surveillance satellites are launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., into polar orbit, enabling them to look down on every region of the world during a 24-hour series of passes around the globe.